

## **What is SIF?**

An important part of K-12 education is the ability to collect and analyze data from a variety of resources. This information is essential to any decision support system and must be based on a complete and accurate set of data. The challenge is to find a way for the state to collect the data from the districts, both in a timely and consistent manner. Currently, there are numerous financial information systems in the districts, including some districts that may not even have a financial system or use simple spreadsheets.

This is where the Schools Interoperability Framework (SIF) comes into play. It is an open standard for K-12 data exchange and is composed of the SIF-Connect Server and the Universal Agent Suite tools.

With the Universal Agent Suite, data can be extracted from a variety of applications, converted into a format that meets the current SIF specifications, and placed into an Operational Data Store. Next, the Universal Agent sends the data to the SIF-Connect Server, a Zone Integration Server (ZIS). The ZIS analyzes the data it receives and determines where the data should be sent, and routes it accordingly. In the same light, the State's ZIS will receive the data from the district and distribute it, using the Universal Agent Framework, to the application at the State.

### Data Mapper Tool

The key component for data retrieval is the Data Mapper Tool. The Data Mapper Tool allows the crosswalk of information from local financial system databases to map to elements based on the SIF standard. The Data Mapper Tool has the capability to compare data tables for differential changes. Neither the state nor the district need to provide differential tables if they are not available; a data comparison can be created and the differences can be reported to other applications. The Data Mapper Tool can accept data from multiple sources.

### Reliability

- Fail-Safe Guaranteed Delivery of All Messages
- Extensive Error Reporting and Messaging Management
- Enforces SIF Security Requirements

### Scalability

- Distributed Scalability
- Integrated Scalability and Support for Large SIF Messages

### Manageability

- Complete Web Based Administration
- Component Based Installations
- Platform Independent and Vendor Neutral